

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01

TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 INR-07 CIAE-00

PRS-01 L-03 DODE-00 /091 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7423

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCPAC

USUN NEW YORK 4007

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1337

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SN, CS

SUBJECT: GOS PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

REF: (A) SINGAPORE 1224, (B) SINGAPORE 1195, (C) SINGAPORE 899

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. KAMPUCHEAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IENG SARY SPENT MARCH 21 TO 24 VISITING SINGAPORE. THIS CABLE PROVIDES ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON GOS REACTION TO SARY VISIT, EXPANDING AND REINFORCING THEMES DISCUSSED REF A. IN ESSENCE, GOS HOSTS WERE IMPRESSED WITH
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KAMPUCHEAN LACK OF DOCTRINAL IDEOLOGY AND STRONG KHMER IDENTIFICATION WITH NON-ALIGNED POSITION, AND RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO IENG SARY'S REQUEST FOR RESUMPTION OF FOREIGN TRADE.

2. ACCORDING TO MFA SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE LEE KHOON CHOY, IENG SARY TOOK SURPRISINGLY NON-IDEOLOGICAL STANCE IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH GOS OFFICIALS. AFTER BEING GIVEN

CUSTOMARY LECTURE ON SINGAPORE'S ANTI-COMMUNIST POSITION AND INTOLERANCE OF FOREIGN ATTEMPTS TO PROMOTE OR ASSIST SUBVERSION IN SINGAPORE, SARY ASKED RHETORICALLY "WHAT IS COMMUNISM, YOU WILL FIND NO REFERENCE TO COMMUNISM IN THE CAMBODIAN CONSTITUTION." WHILE SARY NOTED THAT KAMPUCHEA MORALLY SUPPORTED REVOLUTION, HE AVERRED THAT CAMBODIA DID NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER STATES. MFA POLITICAL DIVISION DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR S.E. ASIA PETER CHAN TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE CAMBODIANS HAD NOT YET ADVANCED DOCTRINALLY TO POINT OF MAKING DISTINCTION BETWEEN STATE AND PARTY AS FAR AS SUPPORT OF REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS CONCERNED. CHAN STRESSED THAT THE CAMBODIANS HAD YET TO PUBLISH ANY THEORETICAL POLITICAL WORKS, OR ORGANIZE THEIR RATHER SHADOWY PARTY. SARY TRIED TO CONVEY IMPRESSION KHMER RULERS WERE NOT COMMUNISTS, BUT REVOLUTIONARY AGRARIAN NATIONALISTS. COMMENT: GOS, ALTHOUGH MIDLY SKEPTICAL OF SARY'S LINE, SEEMS GENUINELY INTRIGUED BY POSITION OF CAMBODIAN VISITORS. SARY'S REFERENCE TO LACK OF MENTION OF COMMUNISM IN GDK CONSTITUTION, AND DEMONSTRABLE ABSENCE OF IDEOLOGICAL DOGMATISM, MAY MAKE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF AMICABLE, IF NOT CLOSE, GOS-GDK RELATIONSHIP. END COMMENT.

3. MAIN THRUST OF MISSION WAS TO FEEL OUT SINGAPOREANS ON RESUMPTION OF TRADE TIES. GOS AND GDK DELEGATION AGREED ON ESTABLISHMENT OF CAMBODIAN TRADE OFFICE, WHICH K.C. LEE BELIEVES WILL BE OPENED VERY SHORTLY. WHILE IT APPEARS THAT NO ONE IN PHNOM PENH FULLY UNDERSTANDS MECHANICS OF FOREIGN TRADE REQUIREMENTS, GOS EXPECTS RESUMPTION OF TRADE ON BARTER BASIS -- RICE, TIMBER, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND FISH IN RETURN FOR AGRICULTURAL TOOLS. CHAN BELIEVES THAT HERMIT STATE STAGE IS ENDING, AS KAMPUCHEA RESUMES NORMAL TIES WITH REST OF WORLD. CAUGHT BETWEEN THAILAND AND VIETNAM, ADMITTEDLY UNDERDEVELOPED AND UNDERPOPULATED, GDK, ACCORDING TO CHAN, WILL RESUME BASIC NON-ALIGNED POSTURE OF SIHANOUK PERIOD.

4. K.C. LEE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE LACK OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE ON THE PART OF THE DELEGATION. IENG SARY SPOKE A LITTLE FRENCH AND NO ENGLISH. ONE MEMBER SPOKE POOR ENGLISH AND ANOTHER POOR FRENCH. FORTUNATELY, ONE OF THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION SPOKE MANDARIN RATHER WELL. K.C. SAID HE HAD ASKED WHAT LANGUAGES WERE BEING TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS IN CAMBODIA AND WAS TOLD ONLY KHMER.

5. K.C. LEE ALSO RELATED THAT IENG SARY WAS VERY SELF-ASSURED AND GAVE EVERY EVIDENCE OF BEING CONFIDENT IN HIS POSITION. IT WAS CLEAR THAT EVERYONE ELSE ON THE DELEGATION DEFERRED TO HIS JUDGEMENT.

THROUGHOUT THE VISIT HE NEVER GAVE ANY INDICATION THAT
HE HAD TO WORRY ABOUT HOW HIS ASSOCIATES IN PHNOM
PENH WOULD REACT TO WHAT HE SAID OR DID.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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